

## Ehrlich Boots Environmental Administrators

Tuesday, January 14, 2003

Maryland Gov.-elect Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. sent dismissal notices to eight top state environmental officials yesterday, part of a purge of key agency staff that will commence as soon as the Republican is sworn in at noon tomorrow.

Letters written by Ehrlich's designee for appointments secretary, Lawrence J. Hogan Jr., were hand-delivered yesterday morning to four officials at the Department of Natural Resources, three at the Department of the Environment and to the chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, who reviews decisions about land use on the shores of the bay and its tributaries.

"The incoming administration recognizes your valuable contributions on behalf of the state of Maryland," the letter says. But, "the people of this state have voted for a change in state government.

"Our intention is to make immediate changes in the governor's cabinet and key personnel in order to begin implementing a new vision for the future of Maryland. Please be advised that upon the swearing-in of the new governor at 12:00 p.m. on January 15, 2003, the new governor's appointees will be assuming responsibility for your position."

Ehrlich spokesman Henry Fawell said the letters were among 30 delivered yesterday to "top leadership" below the cabinet secretary level in 18 agencies across state government. Fawell declined to identify those officials by name or position, but sources in the current administration said letters also were delivered at the Department of Transportation and the Department of Business and Economic Development.

The new administration has settled on replacements for the 30 employees, Fawell said, but it has no authority to terminate them until Ehrlich is inaugurated.

"They're basically courtesy letters to thank these individuals for their contribution and to let them know the governor intends to make changes," he said.